

INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN 1998-2003

U.S. ARMY ALASKA  VOLUME 2-FORT RICHARDSON



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This Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan meets the requirements of the Siskiyou Act (16 U.S.C. 670a et seq.) as amended.

Richard L. Stouder  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Garrison Commander



Date

15 Jan 98



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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

APPROVAL

This Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan meets the requirements of the Sikes Act (16 U.S.C. 670a et seq.) as amended.

Tom Allen  
State Director, Alaska  
Bureau of Land Management

12/14/98

Date



INTEGRATED NATURAL RESOURCES  
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U.S.  
**FISH & WILDLIFE  
SERVICE**

APPROVAL

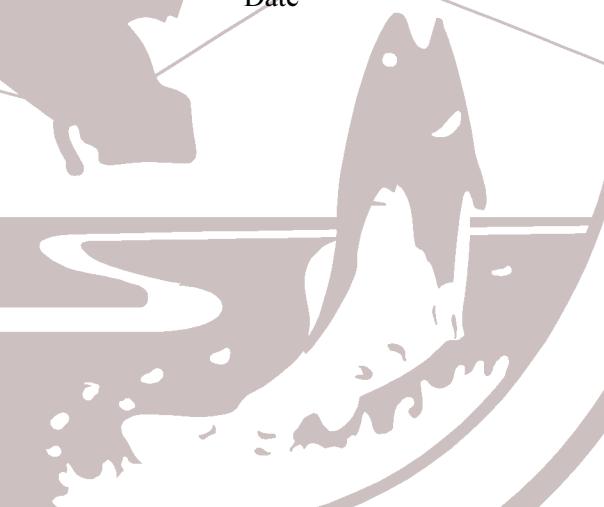
This Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan meets the requirements of the Sikes Act (16 U.S.C. 670a et seq.) as amended.

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Region 7, U.S.  
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11/16/98

Date





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U.S. ARMY ALASKA  
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# PREFACE

*“We do not own this land; we are caretakers of the land and the plant and animal species that inhabit it. The American people entrust the land to our care, and we shall fulfill their trust. We shall conserve and protect these resources for the future.”<sup>1</sup>*

At the turn of the 19th century, French scientist J.B. LaMark cautioned that man is destined to extinction by destroying his environment. Two hundred years later, little has been done to preserve our environment, while much has been done to deplete it. As we stand on the threshold of a new century, it is clear that the steps we take today to protect our natural resources will be our legacy to generations in the 21st century and beyond. From a military standpoint, the way we manage our lands will, in part, affect the nation’s future defense posture.

In this age of environmental awareness, management of our nation’s natural resources must be based on a sound approach and dedicated programs. Crucial to the success of this endeavor is a true, unfaltering commitment from commanders, sol-

iers, trainers, natural resource personnel, and engineers.

The Department of Defense (DOD) is steward of about 25 million acres of land in the United States, harboring many irreplaceable natural and cultural resources. As our nation continues to grow and develop, these military lands become important as last strongholds for much of our country’s dwindling natural resources.

U.S. Army Alaska (USARAK) is custodian for nearly two million acres of predominately undeveloped land on which to carry out its mission. With two large posts in Alaska’s interior and a smaller one in the southcentral region, USARAK enjoys a full representation of the unique natural resources and environmental conditions that Alaska has to



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<sup>1</sup>Robert M. Walker, Assistant Secretary of the Army Testimony before Congress, July 11, 1995

offer. It is this that makes USARAK's "Northern Warrior" a special kind of soldier who lives and trains in one of the most rugged and beautiful places left on earth.

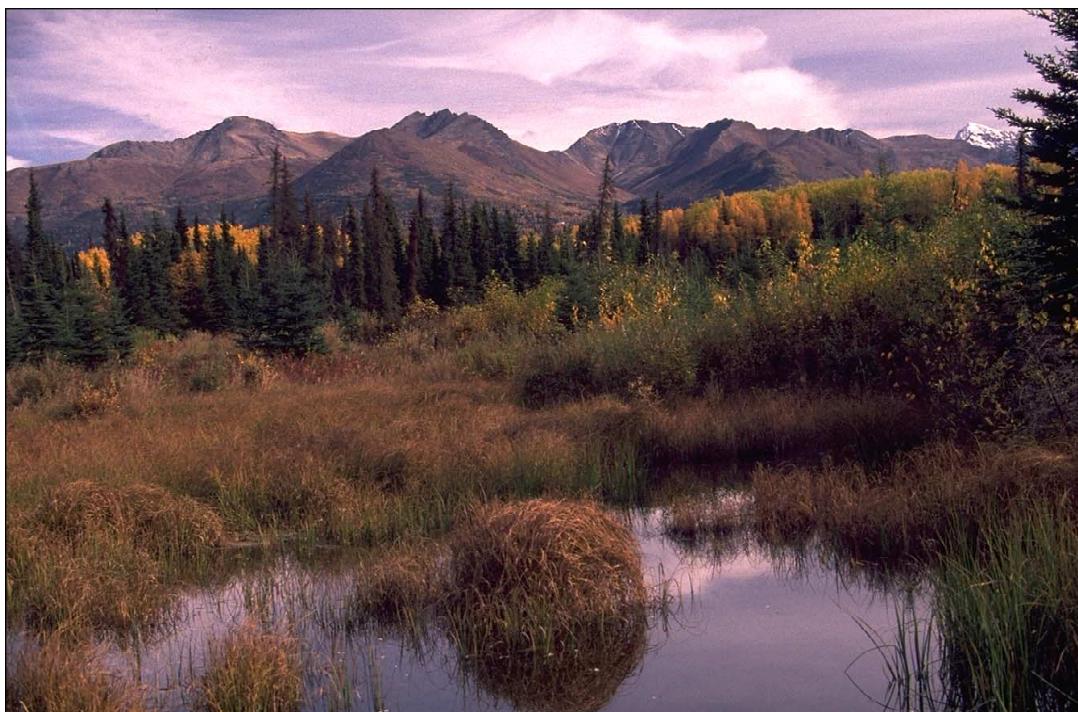
Nestled below the massive peaks of the Chugach Range, Fort Richardson, Headquarters U.S. Army Alaska, together with neighboring Chugach State Park, gives Anchorage all the charisma and charm of a city poised on the edge of wilderness. The military lands encompass countless lakes and ponds, coastline, vast forested areas, and tundra-covered mountain slopes. They harbor a variety of wildlife including moose, Dall sheep, wolves, brown and black bears, wolverines, lynx, coyote, otters, beavers, bald eagles, trumpeter swans, and a myriad of lesser known species. These natural treasures are contained within a 61,000 acre continuum of ecosystems, making a dramatic transition from the marine environment of Upper Cook Inlet to the spartan alpine peaks of the Chugach Mountains in a distance of less than eight miles. This unique responsibility and opportunity is found nowhere else on lands owned or used by the Department of Defense.

Those who live and train on Fort Richardson well understand and appreciate both the intrinsic and

practical value of these lands and their natural resources. The fact that they still exist at all in a relatively natural state is a credit to the Army. Immediately outside the post, land development occurs feverishly whenever and wherever it can and repeated attempts are made to secure either ownership or long-term use of Fort Richardson's valuable training lands for non-training uses. Past losses of training lands and natural resources for uses not supporting the training mission have placed the post in a state of operational concern. Any future losses seriously threaten its military viability.

This concern dictates the current policy that any long-term use of Fort Richardson's lands and natural resources that is not clearly in the best interests of the military mission and/or the environment is generally unacceptable. Under Army stewardship, the land and natural resources have been improved and preserved over the years, and the Army intends to continue to preserve them. The condition of these lands is crucial to the military mission, the well-being of the community, and the overall health of the nation's environment.

This Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan is USARAK's authoritative guide for the care and wise use of lands entrusted to the U.S. Army,



as endorsed by the Commanding General and other signatory agencies. The plan covers a five-year period, but the philosophy behind it will be used for a much longer period of time. USARAK is committed to using an ecosystem management approach to its natural resources program. This approach helps protect biological diversity and facilitates sound decisions regarding the wise use of

renewable natural resources to support the needs of the military mission in the region.

Abundant and diverse natural resources, and a healthy environment for promoting premier training grounds . . . now and forever . . . is the commitment of U.S. Army Alaska.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan, which has been several years in the making, is a result of the cooperative efforts of a diverse group of hard-working, committed individuals. It is a high quality document containing a wealth of information about Alaska, the Army, Fort Richardson, the Anchorage area, and the surrounding natural environment. Its value and use extends far beyond that of wildlife and natural resources management.

Of the many individuals who have been involved in the creation of this plan, I would like to take the opportunity to recognize and acknowledge those who have contributed the most. First and foremost, I thank the Fort Richardson Natural Resources Management staff, namely, William A. Quirk, Laurie Angell, Gary Larsen, Stephen N. Wilson, William H. Smith, and Steve Drake for their tireless efforts in every aspect of building this plan from start to finish.

I am also grateful to the U.S. Army Alaska Command and The Directorate of Public Works, particularly Douglas W. Johnson, Chief of Environmental Resources, for providing the funds and continued support necessary to ensure the successful production of this document.

I thank the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), especially Jeff Denton, Lorri Denton, Clint Hanson, and Mary Hanson for not only providing important technical assistance, but for helping craft the basic blueprint for the document's foundation. The idea

of creating a general management plan supported by specific subordinate action plans is a concept that, although new to the Army, has been used by BLM for quite some time.

Appreciation also goes to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (Rick Sinnott, Mike McDonald, and Dan Rosenberg) for providing valuable information and comments during review of the draft document. Thanks to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their support of the document.

Finally, I would like to thank Gene Stout and Associates along with the Center for Ecological Management of Military Lands at Colorado State University for navigating through the overwhelming amount of data and information that had been collected and saved by Natural Resources Branch "Pack Rats" over the last 35 years, and fashioning it into a real "gem." Your technological and creative skills have been an impressive and valuable asset. Ms. Tracy Wager, whose artwork graces the cover of this document, deserves special thanks not only for the beautiful layout and design of the document, but also for her patience and tolerance of my seemingly never-ending edits.

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William A. "Goose" Gossweiler  
Chief, USARAK Natural Resources

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